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Captain Sword and Captain Pen.

Leigh Hunt

49. 2046.







Captain Sword and Captain Pen.

A POEM

BY LEIGH HUNT.

THE THIRD EDITION.

WITH

A NEW PREFACE, REMARKS ON WAR,

AND NOTES

DETAILING

THE HORRORS ON WHICH THE POEM IS FOUNDED.

LONDON :

CHARLES GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.

1849.

LONDON:
J. UNWIN, GRESHAM STEAM PRESS,
BUCKLESBURY.



A FEW MORE FIRST WORDS,

OCCASIONED BY

IMMEDIATE EVENTS.

SINCE this book went to press, the Peace Congress at Paris has added to the importance of the movements against war, and the startling letter of Mr. Gurney corroborated the financial arguments of Mr. Cobden and others. All the reasoning which has been adduced on the other side of the question may be found in the columns of the *Times* newspaper, set forth with the usual wit and fine writing which distinguish that extraordinary journal. But the reasoning is not new, nor does it seem very self-satisfied. The instincts of the writer's

better genius are against it, whatever his "knowledge of the world," or his sense of the political expediency of the moment, may induce him to say in favour of common-places.

It is related of Queen Victoria, that when she heard of the first war that broke out within the bounds of the empire since her accession to the throne, her Majesty said, with the tears in her eyes, that she "had hoped to have a bloodless reign." I know not if the story be true; but it is in unison with all that is understood of her sensible and considerate nature. And who indeed can doubt, that she would fain have every one of her subjects as safe and sound as peace and prosperity could make him? Is a time never to come, when the desire of every human heart, from the throne to the cottage, shall work out a corresponding determination? Shall we acquiesce in an evil, and think it irremediable, merely because it is enormous? That may be an argument with superstition, and with other slavish states of the human mind. It was once an argument against interfering with plague and pesti-

lence. But we now take steps against pestilence, because it is at our doors. Shall we take none against war, merely because it tears our friends and children to pieces *at a distance*?

We know what the Prime Minister thinks of war. We know what the majority of statesmen, both in England and France, think of the inexpediency of it at the present moment. But the ministers and statesmen of other countries, it is argued, may not be so wise, and they are under Sovereigns very different from our own.

Refuse them the supplies, says Mr. Gurney. Refuse them for your own sake, or wars will make you bankrupt.

Refuse them, says Mr. Cobden, for humanity and decency's sake; and refuse them also, (if that is not sufficient,) for the sake of the very considerable chance of non-return. You are lending money for bad purposes, to men who have repeatedly been insolvent.

This admonition has been strangely called a violation of the principles of free trade; as if

freedom of action, and indifference to its consequences, were identical. It might as well be argued, that a druggist had an equal right to sell poison to the best and worst man in his neighbourhood, and that it would be mere officiousness in a by-stander to warn him against the mistake.

Elemental necessity in the nature of things (like poison itself, or hydrogen), or unavoidableness, owing to the passions of men (which might amount to the same thing), or expediency in the particular instances, must either be the grounds on which war is defended, or the advocate must fairly say, at once, "It is a perplexing and painful subject, and I do not choose to argue it." Now, unless arguments have been advanced, which I have overlooked in the perusal, this latter determination, however it may seem to have talked otherwise, appears to me to be the real state of the case at present with those who could surely argue better than they do, if they went to the root of the matter at all.

I still, therefore, cannot but think it incum-

bent on a hater of war to endeavour to render it as intelligible and hateful as possible.

To descend to a climax of "tremendous insignificance," (as the Gascon gentleman said,) I am afraid that the references of some of the notes to their authorities, in this edition of my poem, are incorrect. The copier had omitted them; illness has prevented my going to the British Museum to ascertain them; and I have been unable to procure the books in other quarters. But due pains will be taken for their rectification, should the poem be republished; and, at all events, the writer feels that he is under no necessity of vouching for his veracity. The passages extracted speak for themselves;—to say nothing of his character as an honest man.

One word more. The first and second editions of the poem were dedicated to a noble and learned Lord, for whom the writer has never ceased to entertain great and grateful respect; but as his lordship's opinions on the subject appear to have undergone some modi-

fications that might have rendered the address to him not so proper, I have done what I thought least unbecoming to the space which it occupied, by leaving it unappropriated to anybody.

LEIGH HUNT.

October 12th, 1849.

PREFACE

TO THE

PRESENT EDITION,

CONTAINING FURTHER REMARKS ON THE IMPORTANCE
OF THE SUBJECT.

THE poetical portion of this book, together with the remarks on the *Duty of considering the Horrors of War, &c.*, was first published in the year 1835. The notes, which detail those horrors, as described by soldiers themselves, or by the historians of soldiers, on military authority, now appear for the first time; and I have added a few to the remarks.

Of the poetry (if, without being immodest, I may venture to speak of it at all, and to apply to myself a term used in criticising painters) I

would observe, in passing, that it is written in the Author's later and more spiritual manner, which experience led him to adopt after quitting the material school of Dryden; and that he looks upon it, in regard to expression, as one of the least faulty of his productions. I hope he need not add, that he is far from wishing any comparison to be instituted between himself and that master, whose powers would "cut up" into half a dozen cadets of reputation, in schools greater than his own. I only mean to say, that the author of *Absalom and Ahithophel*, and of the *Fables from Chaucer*, &c., is inferior, as an imaginative guide, to the poets whom he himself venerated, and to that innermost delicacy of perception, which they included in natures no less robust.

The notes, to which I have just drawn the reader's attention, I withheld from the first edition of the poem, for reasons which are given in the remarks. In the second edition, I omitted the worst part of the horrors which the poem itself contained, assigning also reasons for the omission, which no longer need

be regarded. I now reprint the poem entire, and subjoin the horrors on which it was founded, not out of any regard for what are considered attractions of that kind (than which I hold nothing to be more indicative of a wrong state of mind and feeling), but in counteraction to the neutralising assertions of those who maintain that everybody is agreed respecting the horrors of war, and that the only difficulty is how to find a remedy for them.

I reply to these persons, that supposing everybody to be agreed on that point, everybody is far from being agreed to the same purpose, or with the same amount of knowledge and sympathy—that the agreement, which, in most instances, is little else than faint and verbal, is too often assumed for the purpose of getting rid of the subject—and that, in order to prove the zeal for discovering the remedy, it would be as well, in future, not to confine the agreement to the affirmation, but to take some step in the direction of the search.

I am not a writer (as I have before observed) whose habit it is to deal in painful subjects, however I may be forced, now and then, by a sense of duty, out of the track of pleasant ones. It is not my custom to invite the attention of my readers to wounds and sores. I am sometimes accused of doing the reverse; of finding too many pleasures in pains; too much of the "soul of goodness in things evil;" nor have I failed to accompany the present exposure with intimations of that comfort, — of that beautiful, and, to me, irrefutable certainty. My belief in the goodness of Nature, and in the final happiness of all things, is unbounded. The very pain through which Nature works, considering the beauty that accompanies it, is a proof to me that her object is great and noble. I accept it with exultation, even if I perish in the course of it; and I accept it with transport, believing that everything will be found right and joyous in its immortal consummation.

But human beings meantime, by the incitement of Nature herself, are among the


instruments of human progression; and as it is specially incumbent on those who are of a pleasurable tendency, not to shrink from the communion of pain, but to see what they can do, either towards bearing and helping to bear it, or to hasten its termination, so I would say, to any man of sense and feeling who takes up this volume, and who has not yet happened to turn his attention to the great cause advocated by the societies of Peace and Brotherhood,—Read my verses, or not, as you please; read or not, as you please, the remarks on war and statesmen;—but read, by all means, the notes detailing the horrors of war;—read them, and reflect on them, if it be but for half an hour (for no pain need be longer than is requisite for a good result); and if, at the end of that half hour, they have not supplied the casting vote in favour of whatever step it may be in your power to take on the side in question,—be it no greater than sixpence to a subscription, or a word of encouragement to those who can better afford to give it,—then sense and feeling have reasons for de-

clining to assist humanity, which it is beyond the faculties of my mind to conceive.

As to those who have considered the question enough already, perhaps with too great emotion, I say to them,—Don't read the horrors at all, whether in prose or verse. Confine yourselves to the March, and the Ball-room, and to the peaceful militations of Captain Pen. Nay, read not even those, if they associate themselves with ideas too painful. It is enough that you have suffered pain already, and have sympathised to some purpose. But admit the book, nevertheless, into your house. Let your children see it. Let them grow up acquainted, not only with drums and trumpets, but with what comes *after* the trumpet and the drum. The happy nature of childhood is seldom liable to impressions too serious. But impression will be made; and, by-and-by, it may be useful.

Nobody, I believe, will dispute the propriety of designating the cause a "great cause." It may not have yet attained to the prosperity entitling it to the honours of a "great fact;"

though it is a fact which is growing daily, and one, it may be assumed, of no despicable dimensions. But a greater cause, except that of the poor, (and there is no mean link between both,) is hardly conceivable. And the opposition to it, and sometimes contempt of it, are proofs of the greatness; for they show the difficulties through which it forces its way,—amounting, says the contempt, to “impossibility.” It is what contempt has said to every great cause, till prosperity has won its adhesion. The Anti-Corn-Law movement was treated with contempt till it became a “great fact.” Reform was treated with contempt in like manner. Sir Thomas More treated heresy, and Strafford treated revolution, with contempt. The Jews treated Christianity with contempt; and Christianity (not, indeed, of the most Christian sort) returned the contempt till the other day, when Judaism was found to be, if not a very great fact, yet a very rich and respectable fact,—at least, in the City of London; and, for my part, I heartily wish it success everywhere, seeing what a Christian



thing it is, and what an example it sets of good behaviour. Everything has been treated with contempt, which contradicted, even in the gentlest manner, (the more indeed on that account,) the preconceptions, and therefore the self-love, of the contemners.

“But it is contrary to human nature,” say these gentlemen, “to the passions of men, that there should be no war. You must alter the creature himself first—make him another being.”

How do they know? And from what do they reason? They reason from the speck of time called history. They reason from an ignorance of the vast measurements of time to come, of the mystery of being itself, and of all which it is in the power of time and being to effect. If, in so short a space of time as four thousand years, or even as the twenty or thirty thousand of the orientalist, or the myriads themselves of the geologist (of the humanity of which we know nothing); if, in short, during the little space of time of which we have any knowledge or tradition, war has

been modified as much as it has been,—softened and civilised,—made a thing even of courtesy and consideration,—why may it not be modified in proportion, as time advances, or not be done away with altogether? Who is to say where the modification is to stop? Especially, now that the world have got a press, and wisdom need never be forced back, and railroads and electrical intercourse have arrived, and the sense of the comfort, and even the necessity of neighbourly communion *must* continue advancing?

There was once a time when inquisitors would have laughed in your face, if you told them that inquisitions would be abolished; when cannibals would have laughed in your face, and appealed to your “passions,” if you told them that cannibalism would be abolished; when our British ancestors, sitting with their legs in ditches instead of drawing-rooms, and their bodies naked and painted, instead of being invested with the elegancies of Mr. Nichol, would have thought a man out of his senses, if by any possibility of imagination he

could have conceived the celestial advent of a pair of cotton stockings, or the millennium of Bunhill-row. For, not to mention (they would have said) the inconsistency of such luxurious states of existence, how could any true Briton, *tattooed* with glory, ever give up the enchanting faces of sun and moon, with which he decorates his stomach? Or, how could the passions of such of us as reside in York, ever permit us to put an end to wars with the natural enemies that inhabit London?

Now London and York fight no more, though they fought in the times of the ancient Britons. Lancashire and Surrey fight no more, though they fought in the times of the Saxons. And they fight no more, simply because they have discovered the inconvenience of fighting, and prefer living in neighbourly brotherhood. What, then, is to hinder France and England from fighting no more—as intercourse increases, and the vine-grower learns to consider the soldier of no earthly use in his exchange of goods with the manufacturer?

There was a time when no Scotchman sat

down to dinner with a neighbour, without sticking his dirk into the table by the side of his trencher, as a caution in case of argument, and an intimation of the sort of point with which it might be necessary to conclude it. Does he do so now? Yet his "passions" are the same. Must he of necessity vent them in the same manner? Must he stick a dagger into somebody, in some part of the world, before he can feel comfortable with his "passions?" Before he can settle his difference of opinion with a papal or anti-papal antagonist? And if not he, why anybody? If not anybody, why a nation? The Scotchman appeals, perhaps, to a court of law—or, if he is wiser, to arbitration; and the state of opinion, in his once pugnacious country, is such, that the arbiters are as little under the necessity of enforcing their award by a file of soldiers, as Scotchmen after dinner are under the necessity of fighting out an appeal to their host. What is to hinder the growth of such feelings from intersocial to international good sense?

Oh! but we shall grow too commercial, too

mechanical, and, above all, too effeminate, for want of occasionally blowing each other to bits; of shrieking for water, and for termination to our misery, on fields of battle; and of the fires, massacres, and worse horrors, of cities that are besieged.

Why so? Do not other acquirements progress, as well as those of commerce? Do not the minds of the commercial progress with them, and issue forth to advantage on the arenas of legislation? Do these minds hate books, and languages, and fine arts, and intellectual and moral progress of any kind? And, nevertheless, do they not inhabit strenuous and active bodies, that go through more fatigue in a session than soldiers do for years, except during an actual campaign? Does mechanism itself not take poetical and exalting shapes in the wonders of steam and electricity? And as to education, why need education cease to be robust and noble, because men have considered the subject more closely, and seen into the bodily as well as mental wants of its disciples? Why may it not, indeed, become far nobler

than it is, and substitute manly training of all kinds, within the bounds of reason—for instructions how to grow mad, and organise one another's death and misery?

Great qualities may undoubtedly be fetched out by war, and may adorn it. They may blind us even to its calamities. Nature, in the course of the great working of her designs, will have no misery unexalted or unadorned by moral qualities. She will insist on comforting us by the way. But are we to refuse, on that account, her incitements to advance—to enter happier regions of time and wisdom? If so, why does she put the thoughts into our heads? and into heads, observe, not of the merely simple and believing, but of some of the greatest men that have instructed, and that have *altered* the earth? Why did Plato, and Bacon, and Sir Thomas More himself, speculate on their “Utopias?” Why did the French philosopher endeavour to laugh down war? And why has there existed scarcely a philosopher of any nation, or man of common sense either, who has not both ridiculed and deplored

it? What made Henry the Fourth himself, Frenchman and conqueror as he was, anticipate the feelings of the Peace and Brotherhood Societies, and propose to set up Arbitration in its stead?

But I am entering into a new discussion, when I intended only an advertisement. Besides, I am afraid that the absurdity, with which the question in favour of war is begged, has been leading me, now and then, into a tone hardly serious enough for the grave matter which follows.

To the gravest portion of that matter, if the reader is not yet thoroughly acquainted with it, or has not yet been led to take any steps towards the prevention of what it records, I again beg his earnest attention.

LEIGH HUNT.

KENSINGTON,


July 17th, 1849.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THIS Poem is the result of a sense of duty, which has taken the Author from quieter studies, during a great public crisis. He obeyed the impulse with joy, because it took the shape of verse; but with more pain, on some accounts, than he chooses to express. However, he has done what he conceived himself bound to do; and if every zealous lover of his species were to express his feelings in like manner, to the best of his ability, individual opinions, little in themselves, would soon amount to an overwhelming authority, and hasten the day of reason and beneficence.



The measure is regular, with an irregular aspect,—four accents in a verse,—like that of *Christabel*, or some of the poems of Sir Walter Scott:—

Càptain Swòrd got ùp one dày—
And the flàg full of hònour, as thòugh it could feèl.

He mentions this, not, of course, for readers in general, but for the sake of those daily acceders to the list of the reading public, whose knowledge of books is not yet equal to their love of them.

ON THE
DUTY OF CONSIDERING THE HORRORS
AND THE
ALLEGED NECESSITY OF WAR:

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN A POSTSCRIPT TO
THE FIRST EDITION.

THE object of this poem is to show the horrors of war, the false ideas of power produced in the minds of its leaders, and, by inference, the unfitness of those leaders for the government of the world.

The author intends no more offence to any one than can be helped: he feels due admiration for that courage and energy, the supposed misdirection of which it deplores; he heartily acknowledges the probability, that that supposed misdirection has been hitherto no misdirection, but a necessity—but he believes that the time is come when, by encouraging the disposition to

question it, its services and its sufferings may be no longer required; and he would fain tear asunder the veil from the sore places of war;—would show what has been hitherto kept concealed, or not shown earnestly, and for the purpose;—would prove, at all events, that the time has come for putting an end to those phrases in the narratives of warfare, by which a suspicious delicacy is palmed upon the reader, who is told, after everything has been done to excite his admiration of war, that his feelings are “spared” a recital of its miseries—that “a veil” is drawn over them—a “truce” given to descriptions which only “harrow up the soul,” &c.

Suppose it be *necessary* to “harrow up the soul,” in order that the soul be no longer harrowed? Moralists and preachers do not deal after this tender fashion with moral, or even physical consequences, resulting from other evils. Why should they spare these? Why refuse to look their own effeminacy in the face,—their own gaudy and overweening encouragement of what they dare not contemplate in its results? Is a

murder in the streets worth attending to,—a single wounded man worth carrying to the hospital,—and are all the murders, and massacres, and fields of wounded, and the madness, the conflagrations, the famines, the miseries of families, and the rickety frames and melancholy bloods of posterity, only fit to have an embroidered handkerchief thrown over them? Must “ladies and gentlemen” be called off, that they may not “look that way,” the “sight is so shocking?” Does it become us to let others endure, what we cannot bear even to think of?


Even if nothing else were to come of inquiries into the horrors of war, surely they would cry aloud for some better provision against their extremity *after* battle,—for some regulated and certain assistance to the wounded and agonised,—so that we might hear no longer of men left in cold and misery all night, writhing with torture,—of bodies stripped by prowlers, perhaps murderers,—and of frenzied men, the darlings of their friends, dying, two, and even several days after the battle, of famine! The field of Waterloo

was not completely cleared of its dead and dying till nearly a week ! Surely large companies of men should be organised for the sole purpose of assisting and clearing away the field after battle. They should be steady men, not lightly admitted, nor unpossessed of some knowledge of surgery, and they should be attached to the surgeon's staff. Both sides would respect them for their office, and keep them sacred from violence. Their duties would be too painful and useful to get them disrespected for not joining in the fight—and possibly, before long, they would help to do away their own necessity, by detailing what they beheld. Is that the reason why there is no such establishment ? The question is asked, not in bitterness, but to suggest a self-interrogation to the instincts of war.

I have not thought proper to put notes to the poem, detailing the horrors which I have touched upon ; nor even to quote my authorities, which are unfortunately too numerous, and contain worse horrors still. They are furnished by almost every history of a campaign, in all quarters of the world.

Circumstances so painful, in a first attempt to render them public for their own sakes, would, I thought, even meet with less attention in prose than in verse, however less fitted they may appear for it at first sight.* Verse, if it has any enthusiasm, at once demands and conciliates attention; it proposes to say much in little; and it associates with it the idea of something consolatory, or otherwise sustaining. But there is one prose specimen of these details, which I will give, because it made so great an impression on me in my youth, that I never afterwards could help calling it to mind when war was spoken of; and as I had a good deal to say on that subject, having been a public journalist during one of the most interesting periods of modern history, and never having been blinded into an admiration of war by the dazzle of victory, the circumstance may help to show how salutary a record of this kind may be, and what an impression the subject might be brought to make on society. The passage is in a note to one of Mr. Southey's

* For reasons given in the Preface to the present edition, these notes and authorities are now added.



poems,—the “Ode to Horror,”—and is introduced by another frightful record, less horrible, because there is not such agony implied in it, nor is it alive.

“I extract,” says Mr. Southey, “the following picture of consummate horror from notes to a poem written in twelve-syllable verse, upon the campaign of 1794 and 1795; it was during the retreat to Deventer. ‘We could not proceed a hundred yards without perceiving the dead bodies of men, women, children, and horses, in every direction. One scene made an impression upon my memory which time will never be able to efface. Near another cart we perceived a stout-looking man and a beautiful young woman, with an infant, about seven months old, at the breast, all three frozen and dead. The mother had most certainly expired in the act of suckling her child; as with one breast exposed she lay upon the drifted snow, the milk to all appearance in a stream drawn from the nipple by the babe, and instantly congealed. The infant seemed as if its lips had but just then been disengaged, and it

reposed its little head upon the mother bosom, with an overflow of milk, frozen as it trickled from the mouth. Their countenances were perfectly composed and fresh, resembling those of persons in a sound and tranquil slumber.’”

“The following description,” he continues, “of a field of battle is in the words of one who passed over the field of Jemappe, after Dumourier’s victory: ‘It was on the third day after the victory obtained by General Dumourier over the Austrians, that I rode across the field of battle. The scene lies on a waste common, rendered then more dreary by the desertion of the miserable hovels before occupied by peasants. Everything that resembled a human habitation was desolated, and for the most part they had been burnt or pulled down, to prevent their affording shelter to the posts of the contending armies. The ground was ploughed up by the wheels of the artillery and waggons; everything like herbage was trodden into mire; broken carriages, arms, accoutrements, dead horses and men, were strewed over the heath. *This was the third day after the battle: it was the beginning*

of November, and for three days a bleak wind and heavy rain had continued incessantly. There were still remaining alive several hundreds of horses, and of the human victims of that dreadful fight. I can speak with certainty of having seen more than four hundred men still living, unsheltered, without food, and without any human assistance, most of them confined to the spot where they had fallen by broken limbs. The two armies had proceeded, and abandoned these miserable wretches to their fate. Some of the dead persons appeared to have expired in the act of embracing each other. Two young French officers, who were brothers, had crawled under the side of a dead horse, where they had contrived a kind of shelter by means of a cloak: they were both mortally wounded, and groaning for each other. One very fine young man had just strength enough to drag himself out of a hollow partly filled with water, and was laid upon a little hillock, groaning with agony; A GRAPE-SHOT HAD CUT ACROSS THE UPPER PART OF HIS BELLY, AND HE WAS KEEPING IN HIS BOWELS WITH A HANDKERCHIEF AND HAT. He begged of me to end his

misery! He complained of dreadful thirst. I filled him the hat of a dead soldier with water, which he nearly drank off at once, and left him to that end of his wretchedness which could not be far distant.' ”

“ I hope,” concludes Mr. Southey, “ I have always felt and expressed an honest and Christian abhorrence of wars, and of the systems that produce them; but my ideas of their immediate horrors fell infinitely short of this authentic picture.”

Mr. Southey, in his subsequent lives of conquerors, and his other writings, will hardly be thought to have acted up to this “ abhorrence of wars, and of the systems that produce them.” Nor is he to be blamed for qualifying his view of the subject, equally blameless (surely) as they are to be held who have retained their old views, especially by him who helped to impress them. His friend, Mr. Wordsworth, in the vivacity of his admonitions to hasty complaints of evil, has gone so far as to say that “ Carnage is God’s

daughter," and thereby subjected himself to the scoffs of a late noble wit. He is addressing the Deity himself:—

“ But thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is man, arrayed for mutual slaughter :
Yea, Carnage is thy daughter.”

Mr. Wordsworth is a fine poet and a philosophical thinker, in spite of his having here paid a tremendous compliment to a rhyme (for unquestionably the word “slaughter” provoked him into that imperative “Yea,” and its subsequent venturous affiliation); but the judgment, to say no more of it, is rash. Whatever the Divine Being *intends* by his permission or use of evil, it becomes us to think the best of it; but not to affirm the appropriation of the particulars to Him under their worst appellation, seeing that He has implanted in us a horror of them, and a wish to do them away. What it is right in Him to do, is one thing; what it is proper in us to affirm that He actually does, is another. And, above all, it is idle to affirm what He intends to do for ever, and to have us eternally venerate and abstain from questioning

an evil. All good and evil, and vice and virtue themselves, might become confounded in the human mind by a like daring; and humanity sit down under every buffet of misfortune, without attempting to resist it: which, fortunately, is impossible. Plato cut this knotty point better, by regarding evil as a thing senseless and unmalignant (indeed, no philosopher regards anything as malignant, or malignant for malignity's sake); out of which, or notwithstanding it, good is worked, and to be worked, perhaps finally to the abolition of evil. But whether this consummation be possible or not, and even if the dark horrors of evil be necessary towards the enjoyment of the light of good, still the horror must be maintained, where the object is really horrible; otherwise, we but the more idly resist the contrast, if necessary—and, what is worse, endanger the chance of melioration, if possible.

Did war appear to me an inevitable evil, I should be one of the last men to show it in any other than its holiday clothes. I can appeal to writings before the public, to testify whether I am

in the habit of making the worst of anything, or of not making it yield its utmost amount of good. My inclinations, as well as my reason, lie all that way. I am a passionate and grateful lover of all the beauties of the universe, moral and material; and the chief business of my life is to endeavour to give others the like fortunate affection. But, on the same principle, I feel it my duty to look evil in the face, in order to discover if it be capable of amendment; and I do not see why the miseries of war are to be spared this interrogation, simply because they are frightful and enormous. Men get rid of smaller evils which lie in their way—nay, of great ones; and there appears to be no reason why they should not get rid of the greatest, if they will but have the courage. We have abolished inquisitions and the rack, burnings for religion, burnings for witchcraft, hangings for forgery (a great triumph in a commercial country), much of the punishment of death in some countries, all of it in others. Why not abolish war? Mr. Wordsworth writes no odes to tell us that the Inquisition was God's daughter; though Lope de Vega, who was one of its officers, might have done

so—and Mr. Wordsworth too, had he lived under its dispensation. Lope de Vega, like Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Southey, was a good man, as well as a celebrated poet: and we will concede to his memory what the English poets will, perhaps, not be equally disposed to grant (for they are severe on the Romish faith), that even the Inquisition, *like War*, might possibly have had some utility in its evil, were it no other than a hastening of Christianity by its startling contradictions of it. Yet it has gone. The Inquisition, as War may be hereafter, is no more. Daughter if it was of the Supreme Good, it was no immortal daughter. Why should “Carnage” be,—especially as God has put it in our heads to get rid of it?

I am aware of what may be said on these occasions, to “puzzle the will;” and I concede, of course, that mankind may entertain false views of their power to change anything for the better. I concede, that all change may be only in appearance, and not make any real difference in the general amount of good and evil; that evil, to a certain invariable amount, may be necessary to the

amount of good (the overbalance of which, with a most hearty and loving sincerity, I ever acknowledge); and finally, that all which the wisest of men could utter on any such subject might possibly be nothing but a jargon,—the witless and puny voice of what we take to be a mighty orb, but which, after all, is only a particle in the starry dust of the universe.

On the other hand, all this may be something very different from what we take it to be, setting aside even the opinions which consider mind as everything, and time and space themselves as only modifications of it, or breathing-room in which it exists, weaving the thoughts which it calls life, death, and materiality.

But, be his metaphysical opinions what they may, who but some fantastic individual, or ultra-contemplative scholar, ever thinks of subjecting to them his practical notions of bettering his condition! And how soon is it likely that men will leave off endeavouring to secure themselves against the uneasier chances of vicissitude, even

if Providence ordains them to do so for no other end than the preservation of vicissitude itself, and not in order to help them out of the husks and thorns of action into the flowers of it, and into the air of heaven? Certain it is, at all events, that the human being is incited to increase his amount of good: and that when he is endeavouring to do so, he is at least not fulfilling the worst part of his necessity. Nobody tells us, when we attempt to put out a fire and to save the lives of our neighbours, that Conflagration is God's daughter, or Murder God's daughter. On the contrary, these are things which Christendom is taught to think ill of, and to wish to put down; and therefore we should put down war, which is murder and conflagration by millions.

To those who tell us that nations would grow cowardly and effeminate without war, we answer, "Try a reasonable condition of peace first, and then prove it. Try a state of things which mankind have never yet attained, because they had no press, and no universal comparison of notes ;

and consider, in the meanwhile, whether so cheerful, and intelligent, and just a state, seeing fair play between body and mind, and educated into habits of activity, would be likely to uneducate itself into what was neither respected nor customary. Prove, in the meanwhile, that nations are cowardly and effeminate, that have been long unaccustomed to war; that the South Americans are so; or that all our robust countrymen, who do not "go for soldiers," are timid agriculturists and manufacturers, with not a quoit to throw on the green, or a saucy word to give to an insult. Moral courage is in self-respect and the sense of duty; physical courage is a matter of health or organisation. Are these predispositions likely to fail in a community of instructed freemen? Doubters of advancement are always arguing from a limited past to an unlimited future; that is to say, from a past of which they know but a point, to a future of which they know nothing. They stand on the bridge "between two eternities," seeing a little bit of it behind them, and nothing at all of what is before, and uttering those words unfit for mortal tongue, "man ever was,"

and "man ever will be." They might as well say what is beyond the stars. It appears to be a part of the necessity of things, from what we see of the improvements they make, that all human improvement should proceed by the co-operation of human means. But what blinker into the night of next week,—what luckless prophet of the impossibilities of steam-boats and steam-carriages,—shall presume to say how far those improvements are to extend? Let no man faint in the co-operation with which God has honoured him.

As to those superabundances of population which wars and other evils are supposed to be necessary in order to keep down, there are questions which have a right to be put, long before any such necessity is assumed: and till those questions be answered, and the experiments dependent upon them tried, the interrogators have a right to assume that no such necessity exists. I do not enter upon them—for I am not bound to do so; but I have touched upon them in the poem; and the "too rich," and other disingenuous

half-reasoners, know well what they are. All passionate remedies for evil are themselves evil, and tend to re-produce what they remedy. It is high time for the world to show that it has come to man's estate, and can put down what is wrong without violence. Should the wrong still return, we should have a right to say with the apostle, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" for meanwhile we should "not have done evil that good may come." That "good" may come! nay, that evil may be perpetuated; for what good, superior to the alternatives denounced, is achieved by this eternal round of war and its causes? Let us do good in a good and kind manner, and trust to the co-operation of Providence for the result. It seems the only real way of attaining to the very best of which our earth is capable; and at the very worst, necessity, like the waters, will find its level, and the equity of things be justified.

I firmly believe that war, or the sending thousands of our fellow-creatures to cut one another to bits, often for what they have no concern in,

nor understand, will one day be reckoned far more absurd than if people were to settle an argument over the dinner-table with their knives, —a logic, indeed, which was once fashionable in some places during the “good old times.” The world has seen the absurdity of that practice: why should it not come to years of discretion, with respect to violence on a larger scale? The other day, our own country and the United States agreed to refer a point in dispute to the arbitration of a king of Holland; a compliment (if we are to believe the newspapers) of which his Majesty was justly proud. He struck a medal on the strength of it, which history will show as a set-off against his less creditable attempts to force his opinions upon the Belgians. Why should not every national dispute be referred, in like manner, to a third party? There is reason to suppose, that the judgment would stand a good chance of being impartial; and it would benefit the character of the judge, and dispose him to receive judgments of the same kind; till at length the custom would prevail, like any other custom; and men be astonished at the custom that pre-

ceded it. In private life, none but school-boys and the vulgar settle disputes by blows; even duelling is losing its dignity.

Two nations, or most likely two governments, have a dispute; they reason the point backwards and forwards; they cannot determine it; perhaps they do not wish to determine it; so, like two carmen in the street, they fight it out; first, however, dressing themselves up to look fine, and pluming themselves on their absurdity; just as if the two carmen were to go and put on their Sunday clothes, and stick a feather in their hat besides, in order to be as dignified and fantastic as possible. They then "go at it," and cover themselves with mud, blood, and glory. Can anything be more ridiculous? Yet, apart from the habit of thinking otherwise, and being drummed into the notion by the very toys of infancy, the similitude is not one atom too ludicrous; no, nor a thousandth part enough so. I am aware that a sarcasm is but a sarcasm, and need not imply any argument—never includes all;—but it acquires a more respectable character when so much is done to keep it out

of sight,—when so many questions are begged against it by “pride, pomp, and circumstance,” and allegations of necessity. Similar allegations may be, and are brought forward, by other nations of the world, in behalf of customs which we, for our parts, think very ridiculous, and do our utmost to put down ; never referring them, as we refer our own, to the mysterious ordinations of Providence ; or, if we do, never hesitating to suppose, that Providence, in moving us to interfere, is varying its ordinations. Now, all that I would ask of the advocates of war, is to apply the possible justice of this supposition to their own case, for the purpose of thoroughly investigating the question.

I will conclude these remarks with quotations from three writers of the present day, who may be fairly taken to represent the three distinct classes of the leaders of knowledge, and who will show what is thought of the feasibility of putting an end to war,—the Utilitarian, or those who are all for the tangible and material—the Metaphysical, or those who recognise, in addition,

the spiritual and imaginative wants of mankind—and lastly (in no offensive sense), the Men of the World, whose opinion will have the greatest weight of all with the incredulous, and whose speaker is a soldier to boot, and a man who evidently sees fair play to all the weaknesses as well as strengths of our nature.

The first quotation is from the venerable Mr. Bentham, a man who certainly lost sight of no existing or possible phase of society, such as the ordinary disputants on this subject contemplate. I venture to think him not thoroughly philosophical on the point, especially in what he says in reproach of men educated to think differently from himself. But the passage will show the growth of opinion in a practical and highly influential quarter.

“Nothing can be worse,” says Mr. Bentham, “than the general feeling on the subject of war. The Church, the State, the ruling few, the subject many, all seem to have combined, in order to patronise vice and crime in their very widest

sphere of evil. Dress a man in particular garments, call him by a particular name, and he shall have authority, on divers occasions, to commit every species of offence, to pillage, to murder, to destroy human felicity, and, for so doing, he shall be rewarded.

“Of all that is pernicious in admiration, the admiration of heroes is the most pernicious; and ~~how~~ delusion should have made us admire what ~~virtue~~ should teach us to hate and loathe, is among the ~~saddest~~ evidences of human weakness and folly. The crimes of heroes seem lost in the vastness of the field they occupy. A lively idea of the mischief they do, of the misery they create, seldom penetrates the mind, through the delusions with which thoughtlessness and falsehood have surrounded their names and deeds. Is it that the magnitude of the evil is too gigantic for entrance? We read of twenty thousand men killed in a battle, with no other feeling than that ‘it was a glorious victory.’ Twenty thousand, or ten thousand, what reck we of their sufferings? The hosts who perished are evidence of the complete-

ness of the triumph; and the completeness of the triumph is the measure of merit, and the glory of the conqueror. Our schoolmasters, and the immoral books they so often put into our hands, have inspired us with an affection for heroes; and the hero is more heroic in proportion to the numbers of the slain—add a cipher, not one iota is added to our disapprobation. Four or two figures give us no more sentiment of pain than one figure, while they add marvellously to the grandeur and splendour of the victor. Let us draw forth one individual from those thousands, or tens of thousands—his leg has been shivered by one ball, his jaw broken by another—he is bathed in his own blood, and that of his fellows,—yet he lives, tortured by thirst, fainting, famishing. He is but one of the twenty thousand—one of the actors and sufferers in the scene of the hero's glory—and of the twenty thousand there is scarcely one whose suffering or death will not be the centre of a circle of misery. Look again, admirers of that hero! Is not this wretchedness? Because it is repeated ten, ten hundred, ten thousand times, is not this wretchedness?

“The period will assuredly arrive, when better instructed generations will require all the evidence of history to credit, that, in times deeming themselves enlightened, human beings should have been honoured with public approval, in the very proportion of the misery they caused, and the mischiefs they perpetrated. They will call upon all the testimony which incredulity can require, to persuade them that, in passed ages, men there were—men, too, deemed worthy of popular recompence—who, for some small pecuniary retribution, hired themselves out to do any deeds of pillage, devastation, and murder, which might be demanded of them. And, still more will it shock their sensibilities to learn, that such men, such men-destroyers, were marked out as the eminent and the illustrious—as the worthy of laurels and monuments—of eloquence and poetry. In that better and happier epoch, the wise and the good will be busied in hurling into oblivion, or dragging forth for exposure to universal ignominy and obloquy, many of the heads we deem *heroic*; while the true fame and the perdurable glories will

be gathered around the creators and diffusers of happiness."—*Deontology*.

Our second quotation is from one of the subtlest and most universal thinkers now living—Thomas Carlyle—chiefly known to the public as a German scholar and the friend of Goethe, but deeply respected by other leading intellects of the day, as a man who sees into the utmost recognised possibilities of knowledge. See what he thinks of war, and of the possibility of putting an end to it. We forget whether we got the extract from the *Edinburgh* or the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, having made it sometime back and mislaid the reference; and we take a liberty with him in mentioning his name as the writer, for which his zeal in the cause of mankind will pardon us.*

"The better minds of all countries," observes Mr. Carlyle, "begin to understand each other,

* Since this paragraph was written, I need not say what a name Mr. Carlyle has procured himself by his writings on the "French Revolution," &c.

and, which follows naturally, to love each other and help each other, by whom ultimately all countries in all their proceedings are governed.

“Late in man’s history, yet clearly, at length, it becomes manifest to the dullest, that mind is stronger than matter—that mind is the creator and shaper of matter—that not brute force, but only persuasion and faith, is the King of this world. The true poet, who is but an inspired thinker, is still an Orpheus whose lyre tames the savage beasts, and evokes the dead rocks to fashion themselves into palaces and stately inhabited cities. It has been said, and may be repeated, that literature is fast becoming all in all to us—our Church, our Senate, our whole social constitution. The true Pope of Christendom is not that feeble old man in Rome, nor is its autocrat the Napoleon, the Nicholas, with its half million even of obedient bayonets; such autocrat is himself but a more cunningly-devised bayonet and military engine in the hands of a mightier than he. The true autocrat, or Pope, is that man, the real or seeming wisest of the last

age; crowned after death; who finds his hierarchy of gifted authors, his clergy of assiduous journalists: whose decretals, written, not on parchment, but on the living souls of men, it were an inversion of the laws of nature to disobey. In these times of ours, all intellect has fused itself into literature; literature—printed thought, is the molten sea and wonder-bearing chaos, in which mind after mind casts forth its opinion, its feeling, to be molten into the general mass, and to be worked there; interest after interest is engulfed in it, or embarked in it; higher, higher it rises round all the edifices of existence; they must all be molten into it, and anew bodied forth from it, or stand unconsumed among its fiery surges. Woe to him whose edifice is not built of true asbest, and on the everlasting rock, but on the false sand and the drift-wood of accident, and the paper and parchment of antiquated habit! For the power or powers exist not on our earth that can say to that sea—roll back, or bid its proud waves be still.

“What form so omnipotent an element will

assume—how long it will welter to and fro as a wild democracy, a wilder anarchy—what constitution and organisation it will fashion for itself, and for what depends on it in the depths of time, is a subject for prophetic conjecture, wherein brightest hope is not unmingled with fearful apprehensions and awe at the boundless unknown. The more cheering is this one thing, which we do see and know—that its tendency is to a universal European commonweal; that the wisest in all nations will communicate and co-operate; whereby Europe will again have its true Sacred College and Council of Amphictyons; wars will become rarer, less inhuman; and in the course of centuries, such delirious ferocity in nations, as in individuals it already is, may be proscribed and become obsolete for ever.”

My last and not least conclusive extract (for it shows the actual hold which these speculations have taken of the minds of practical men—of men out in the world, and even of *soldiers*;) is from a book popular among all classes of readers—the *Bubbles from the Brunnens of Nassau*, written by

Major Sir Francis Head. What he says of one country's educating another, by the natural progress of books and opinion, and of the effect which this is likely to have upon governments even as remote and unwilling as Russia, is particularly worthy of attention.

The author is speaking of some bathers at whom he had been looking, and of a Russian Prince, who lets us into some curious information respecting the leading-strings in which grown gentlemen are kept by despotism:—

“For more than half an hour I had been indolently watching this amphibious scene, when the landlord entering my room said, that the Russian Prince, G——n, wished to speak to me on some business; and the information was scarcely communicated, when I perceived his Highness standing at the threshold of my door. With the attention due to his rank, I instantly begged he would do me the honour to walk in; and, after we had sufficiently bowed to each other, and that I had prevailed on my guest to sit down, I gravely re-

quested him, as I stood before him, to be so good as to state in what way I could have the good fortune to render him any service. The Prince very briefly replied, that he had called upon me, considering that I was the person in the hotel best capable (he politely inclined his head) of informing him by what route it would be most advisable for him to proceed to London, it being his wish to visit my country.

“ In order at once to solve this very simple problem, I silently unfolded and spread out upon the table my map of Europe ; and each of us, as we leant over it, placing a forefinger on or near Wiesbaden (our eyes being fixed upon Dover), we remained in this reflecting attitude for some seconds, until the Prince’s finger first solemnly began to trace its route. In doing this, I observed that his Highness’s hand kept swerving far into the Netherlands, so, gently pulling it by the thumb towards Paris, I used as much force as I thought decorous to induce it to advance in a straight line ; however, finding my efforts ineffectual, I ventured, with respectful astonishment, to ask, ‘ Why travel by so uninteresting a route ? ’

“The Prince at once acknowledged that the route I had recommended would, by visiting Paris, afford him the greatest pleasure; but he frankly told me that no Russian, not even a personage of his rank, could enter that capital, without first obtaining a written permission from the Emperor.

“These words were no sooner uttered, than I felt my fluent civility suddenly begin to coagulate; the attention I paid my guest became forced and unnatural. I was no longer at my ease; and though I bowed, strained, and endeavoured to be, if possible, more respectful than ever, yet I really could hardly prevent my lips from muttering aloud, that I had sooner die a homely English peasant than live to be a Russian prince!—in short, his Highness’s words acted upon my mind like thunder upon beer. And, moreover, I could almost have sworn that I was an old lean wolf, contemptuously observing a bald ring rubbed by the collar, from the neck of a sleek, well-fed mastiff dog; however, recovering myself, I managed to give as much information

as it was in my humble power to afford ; and my noble guest then taking his departure, I returned to my open window, to give vent in solitude (as I gazed upon the horse bath) to my own reflection upon the subject.

“ Although the petty rule of my life has been never to trouble myself about what the world calls ‘politics’ — (a fine word, by the by, much easier expressed than understood)—yet, I must own, I am always happy when I see a nation enjoying itself, and melancholy when I observe any large body of people suffering pain or imprisonment. But, of all sorts of imprisonment, that of the mind is, to my taste, the most cruel ; and, therefore, when I consider over what immense dominions the Emperor of Russia presides, and how he governs, I cannot help sympathising most sincerely with those innocent sufferers, who have the misfortune to be born his subjects ; for if a Russian prince be not freely permitted to go to Paris, in what a melancholy state of slavery and debasement must exist the minds of what we call the lower classes ?

“As a sovereign remedy for this lamentable political disorder, many very sensible people in England prescribe, I know, that we ought to have recourse to arms. I must confess, however, it seems to me that one of the greatest political errors England could commit would be to declare, or to join in declaring, war with Russia; in short, that an appeal to brute force would, at this moment, be at once most unscientifically to stop an immense moral engine, which, if left to its work, is quite powerful enough, without bloodshed, to gain for humanity, at no expense at all, its object. The individual who is, I conceive, to overthrow the Emperor of Russia—who is to direct his own legions against himself—who is to do what Napoleon had at the head of his great army failed to effect, is the little child, who, lighted by the single wick of a small lamp, sits at this moment perched above the great steam press of the ‘Penny Magazine,’ feeding it, from morning till night, with blank papers, which, at almost every pulsation of the engine, comes out stamped on both sides with engravings, and with pages of plain, useful, harmless knowledge, which, by

making the lower orders acquainted with foreign lands, foreign productions, various states of society, &c., tend practically to inculcate ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace—good will towards men.’ It has already been stated, that what proceeds from this press is now greedily devoured by the people of Europe; indeed, even at Berlin, we know it can hardly be reprinted fast enough.

“This child, then,—‘this sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,’—is the only army that an enlightened country like ours should, I humbly think, deign to oppose to one who reigns in darkness—who trembles at daylight, and whose throne rests upon ignorance and despotism. Compare this mild, peaceful, intellectual policy, with the dreadful, savage alternative of going to war, and the difference must surely be evident to everyone. In the former case, we calmly enjoy, first of all, the pleasing reflection, that our country is generously imparting to the nations of Europe the blessing she is tranquilly deriving from the purification of civilisation to her own mind;—far from wishing to

exterminate, we are gradually illuminating the Russian peasant, we are mildly throwing a gleam of light upon the fetters of the Russian prince; and surely every well-disposed person must see, that if we will only have patience, the result of this noble, temperate conduct must produce all that reasonable beings can desire.”—*Bubbles from the Brunnens of Nassau*, p. 164.

By the “Penny Magazine,” our author means, of course, not only that excellent publication, but all cheaply-diffused knowledge—all the tranquil and enlightening deeds of “Captain Pen” in general—of whom it is pleasant to see the gallant Major so useful a servant, the more so from his sympathies with rank and the aristocracy. But “Pen” will make it a matter of necessity, by-and-by, for all ranks to agree with him, in vindication of their own wit and common sense; and when once this necessity is felt, and fastidiousness shall find out that it will be considered “absurd” to lag behind in the career of knowledge and the common good, the cause of the world is secure.

May princes and people alike find it out by the kindest means, and without further violence. May they discover that no one set of human beings, perhaps no single individual, can be thoroughly secure and content, or enabled to work out his case with equal reasonableness, *till all are so*,—a subject for reflection, which contains, we hope, the beneficent reason *why all are restless*. The solution of the problem is co-operation—the means of solving it is the Press. If the Greeks had had a press, we should probably have heard nothing of the inconsiderate question, which demands, why they, with all their philosophy, did not alter the world? They had not the means. They could not command a general hearing. Neither had Christianity come up, to make men think of one another's wants, as well as of their own accomplishments. Modern times possess those means, and inherit that divine incitement. May every man exert himself accordingly, and show himself a worthy inhabitant of this beautiful and most capable world!



CAPTAIN SWORD

AND

CAPTAIN PEN.

I.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD MARCHED TO WAR.

CAPTAIN SWORD got up one day,
Over the hills to march away,
Over the hills and through the towns;
They heard him coming across the downs,
Stepping in music and thunder sweet,
Which his drums sent before him into the street,
And lo! 'twas a beautiful sight in the sun;
For first came his foot, all marching like one,


With tranquil faces, and bristling steel,
And the flag full of honour as though it could
 feel,
And the officers gentle, the sword that hold
'Gainst the shoulder heavy with trembling
 gold,
And the massy tread, that in passing is heard,
Though the drums and the music say never a
 word.

And then came his horse, a clustering sound
Of shapely potency, forward bound,
Glossy black steeds, and riders tall,
Rank after rank, each looking like all,
Midst moving repose and a threatening charm,
With mortal sharpness at each right arm,
And hues that painters and ladies love,
And ever the small flag blush'd above.

And ever and anon the kettle-drums beat
Hasty power midst order meet ;

And ever and anon the drums and fifes
Came like motion's voice, and life's ;
Or into the golden grandeurs fell
Of deeper instruments, mingling well,
Burdens of beauty for winds to bear ;
And the cymbals kiss'd in the shining air,
And the trumpets their visible voices rear'd,
Each looking forth with its tapestried beard,
Bidding the heavens and earth make way
For Captain Sword and his battle-array.

He, nevertheless, rode indifferent-eyed,
As if pomp were a toy to his manly pride,
Whilst the ladies loved him the more for his
scorn,
And thought him the noblest man ever was born,
And tears came into the bravest eyes,
And hearts swell'd after him double their size,
And all that was weak, and all that was strong,
Seem'd to think wrong's self in him could not
be wrong ;



Such love, though with bosom about to be gored,
Did sympathy get for brave Captain Sword.

So, half that night, as he stopp'd in the town,
'Twas all one dance going merrily down,
With lights in windows and love in eyes,
And a constant feeling of sweet surprise;
But all the next morning 'twas tears and sighs;
For the sound of his drums grew less and less,
Walking like carelessness off from distress;
And Captain Sword went whistling gay,
"Over the hills and far away."

II.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD WON A GREAT VICTORY.

THROUGH fair and through foul went Captain
Sword,
Pacer of highway and piercer of ford,
Steady of face in rain or sun,
He and his merry men, all as one ;
Till they came to a place, where in battle-array
Stood thousands of faces, firm as they,
Waiting to see which could best maintain
Bloody argument, lords of pain ;
And down the throats of their fellow-men
Thrust the draught never drunk again.

It was a spot of rural peace,
Ripening with the year's increase,

And singing in the sun with birds,
Like a maiden with happy words—
With happy words which she scarcely hears
In her own contented ears,
Such abundance feeleth she
Of all comfort carelessly,
Throwing round her, as she goes,
Sweet half-thoughts on lily and rose,
Nor guesseth what will soon arouse
All ears—that murder 's in the house ;
And that, in some strange wrong of brain,
Her father hath her mother slain.

Steady ! steady ! The masses of men
Wheel, and fall in, and wheel again,
Softly as circles drawn with pen.

Then a gaze there was, and valour, and fear,
And the jest that died in the jester's ear,
And preparation, noble to see,
Of all-accepting mortality ;

Tranquil Necessity gracing Force;
And the trumpets danced with the stirring horse;
And lordly voices, here and there,
Call'd to war through the gentle air;
When suddenly, with its voice of doom,
Spoke the cannon 'twixt glare and gloom,
Making wider the dreadful room:
On the faces of nations round
Fell the shadow of that sound.

Death for death! The storm begins;
Rush the drums in a torrent of dins;
Crash the muskets, gash the swords;
Shoes grow red in a thousand fords;
Now for the flint, and the cartridge bite;
Darkly gathers the breath of the fight,
Salt to the palate, and stinging to sight;
Muskets are pointed they scarce know where;
No matter: Murder is clattering there.
Reel the hollows: close up! close up!
Death feeds thick, and his food is his cup.

Down go bodies, snap burst eyes;
Trode on the ground are tender cries;
Brains are dash'd against plashing ears;
Hah! no time has battle for tears;
Cursing helps better—cursing, that goes
Slipping through friends' blood, athirst for foes'.
What have soldiers with tears to do?—
We, who this mad-house must now go through,
This twenty-fold Bedlam, let loose with knives—
To murder, and stab, and grow liquid with lives—
Gasping, staring, treading red mud,
Till the drunkenness' self makes us steady of
blood? ¹

¹ *Gasping, staring, treading red mud,*

Till the drunkenness' self makes us steady of blood.

“In action man is quite another being. * * The soul rises above its wonted serenity, into a kind of frenzied apathy to the scene before you—a heroism bordering on ferocity; the nerves become tight and contracted, *the eye full and open, moving quickly in its socket, with almost maniac wildness; the head is in constant motion, the nostrils extended wide, and the mouth apparently gasping.*”

[Oh ! shrink not thou, reader ! Thy part's in
it, too;
Has not thy praise made the thing they go
through,
Shocking to read of, but noble to do ?]

No time to be "breather of thoughtful breath"
Has the giver and taker of dreadful death.

"In many places the dead lay four deep upon each other, marking the spot some British square had occupied, when exposed for hours to the murderous fire of a French battery. Outside, lancer and cuirassier were scattered thickly on the earth. Madly attempting to force the bayonets of the British, they had fallen in the bootless essay by the musketry of the inner files. Further on, you traced the spot where the cavalry of France and England had encountered. Chasseur and hussar were intermingled, and the heavy Norman horse of the imperial guard were interspersed with the grey chargers which had carried Albin's chivalry. There the Highlander and tirailleur lay, side by side, together ; and the heavy dragoon, with 'green Erin's' badge upon his helmet, was grasped in death by the Polish lancer.

"On the summit of the ridge, the ground lay cumbered with dead, and *trodden, fetlock deep, in mud and gore.*"—BOOTH'S *Accounts of Waterloo*, p. xlii.

See where comes the horse-tempest again,
Visible earthquake, bloody of mane!
Part are upon us, with edges of pain;
Part burst, riderless, over the plain,
Crashing their spurs, and twice slaying the
slain.²

See, by the living God! see those foot
Charging down hill—hot, hurried, and mute!

² *See where comes the horse-tempest again,
Visible earthquake, bloody of mane!
Part are upon us, with edges of pain;
Part burst, riderless, over the plain,
Crashing their spurs, and twice slaying the slain.*

Campbell, the poet, during the first wars of the revolution, saw the French army, under Moreau, enter Hohenlinden after defeating the Austrians. The cavalry were wiping their bloody swords on the manes of their horses.

“Thousands of wounded horses were strewn over this scene of slaughter. Some lay quietly on the ground, cropping the grass within their reach; *some, with deep moanings, expressed their sufferings; while others, maddened with pain,*
“*Jerked out their armed heels at their dead masters,
Killing them twice.*”—BOOTH'S *Waterloo*.

They loll their tongues out! Ah-hah! pell-mell!
 Horses roll in a human hell;
 Horse and man they climb one another—
 Which is the beast, and which is the brother?³
 Mangling, stifling, stopping shrieks
 With the tread of torn-out cheeks,
 Drinking each other's bloody breath—
 Here's the fleshliest feast of Death.
 An odour, as of a slaughter-house,
 The distant raven's dark eye bows.⁴

³ *Which is the beast, and which is the brother?*

See any picture of such a *mêlée*, in paintings or engravings; and consider it, not with the "eye of an artist," but with the feelings of a fellow-creature.

The circumstance of "lolling the tongues out," during a charge of bayonets, on a hot and exhausting day, was told me in my youth, on the authority of a soldier who had served in Holland.

⁴ *An odour, as of a slaughter-house,
 The distant raven's dark eye bows.*

"The smell which hung not only about the interior, but the exterior of the cottage, was shocking. Not that the dead had as yet begun to putrify; for though some of them had lain for a couple of days exposed to the influence

Victory! victory! Man flies man;
Cannibal patience hath done what it can—
Carved, and been carved, drunk the drinkers
 down,
And now there is one that hath won the
 crown;—
One pale visage stands lord of the board—
Joy to the trumpets of Captain Sword!

His trumpets blow strength, his trumpets
 neigh,
They and his horse, and waft him away;
They and his foot, with a tired proud flow,
Tatter'd escapers and givers of woe.

of the atmosphere, the weather was far too cold to permit the progress of decomposition to commence; but the odour, even of an ordinary field of battle, is extremely disagreeable. I can compare it to nothing more aptly than the interior of a *butcher's slaughter-house*, soon after he may have killed his sheep or oxen for the market. Here that species of perfume was peculiarly powerful; and it was not the less unpleasant that the smell of burning was mixed with it."—BOOTH'S *Waterloo*.

Open, ye cities! Hats off! hold breath!
To see the man who has been with Death;
To see the man who determineth right
By the virtue-perplexing virtue of might.
Sudden before him have ceased the drums,
And lo! in the air of empire he comes.

All things present, in earth and sky,
Seem to look at his looking eye.

III.

OF THE BALL THAT WAS GIVEN TO CAPTAIN SWORD.

BUT Captain Sword was a man among men,
And he hath become their playmate again :
Boot, nor sword, nor stern look hath he,
But holdeth the hand of a fair ladye,
And floweth the dance a palace within,
Half the night, to a golden din,
Midst lights in windows and love in eyes,
And a constant feeling of sweet surprise ;
And ever the look of Captain Sword
Is the look that's thank'd, and the look that's
adored.

There was the country-dance, small of taste ;
And the waltz, that loveth the lady's waist ;

And the galopade, strange agreeable tramp,
Made of a scrape, a hobble, and stamp;
And the high-stepping minuet, face to face,
Mutual worship of conscious grace;
And all the shapes in which beauty goes
Weaving motion with blithe repose.

And then a table a feast display'd,
Like a garden of light without a shade,
All of gold, and flowers, and sweets,
With wines of old church-lands, and sylvan
meats,
Food that maketh the blood feel choice;
Yet all the face of the feast, and the voice,
And heart, still turn'd to the head of the board;
For ever the look of Captain Sword
Is the look that's thank'd, and the look that's
adored.

Well content was Captain Sword;
At his feet all wealth was pour'd;

On his head all glory set;
For his ease all comfort met;
And around him seem'd entwined
All the arms of womankind.

And when he had taken his fill
Thus, of all that pampereth will,
In his down he sunk to rest,
Clasp'd in dreams of all its best

IV.

ON WHAT TOOK PLACE ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE THE NIGHT AFTER THE VICTORY.

'Tis a wild night out of doors ;
The wind is mad upon the moors,
And comes into the rocking town,
Stabbing all things, up and down,
And then there is a weeping rain
Huddling 'gainst the window-pane,
And good men bless themselves in bed ;
The mother brings her infant's head
Closer, with a joy like tears,
And thinks of angels in her prayers ;
Then sleeps, with his small hand in hers.

Two loving women, lingering yet
Ere the fire is out, are met,
Talking sweetly, time-beguiled,
One of her bridegroom, one her child,
The bridegroom he. They have received
Happy letters, more believed
For public news, and feel the bliss
The heavenlier on a night like this.
They think him housed, they think him blest,
Curtain'd in the core of rest,
Danger distant, all good near;
Why hath their "Good night" a tear?

Behold him! By a ditch he lies
Clutching the wet earth, his eyes
Beginning to be mad. In vain
His tongue still thirsts to lick the rain,
That mock'd but now his homeward tears;
And ever and anon he rears
His legs and knees with all their strength,
And then as strongly thrusts at length.

Raised, or stretch'd, he cannot bear
 The wound that girds him, weltering there :
 And "Water!" he cries, with moonward stare.⁵

["I will not read it!" with a start,
 Burning cries some honest heart ;
 "I will not read it! Why endure
 "Pangs which horror cannot cure?

‘ In vain
*His tongue still thirsts to lick the rain,
 That mock'd but now his homeward tears ;
 And ever and anon he rears
 His legs and knees with all their strength,
 And then as strongly thrusts at length.
 Raised, or stretch'd, he cannot bear
 The wound that girds him, weltering there :
 And "Water!" he cries, with moonward stare.*

"Some poor fellows (among the wounded) could be seen raising their knees up to their chins, and then flinging them down with all their might. Some attempted to rise, but failed in the attempt. One poor fellow I saw get on his legs, put his hand to his bleeding head, then fall, and roll down the hill, to rise no more."—*Memoirs of John Shipp.*

For "Water," which is the universal cry of the wounded on a field of battle, see an anecdote from Southey in the "Remarks on War."

"Why—Oh why? and rob the brave,
"And the bereaved, of all they crave,
"A little hope to gild the grave?"

Ask'st thou why, thou honest heart?
'Tis *because* thou dost ask, and *because* thou
dost start.
'Tis because thine own praise and fond outward
thought
Have aided the shews which this sorrow has
wrought.]

A wound unutterable—Oh God!
Mingles his being with the sod.

["I'll read no more."—Thou must, thou
must:
In thine own pang doth wisdom trust.]


His nails are in earth, his eyes in air,
And "Water!" he crieth—he may not forbear.

Brave and good was he, yet now he dreams
The moon looks cruel; and he blasphemes.

["No more! no more!" Nay, this is but one;
Were the whole tale told, it would not be done
From wonderful setting to rising sun.
But God's good time is at hand—be calm,
Thou reader! and steep thee in all thy balm
Of tears or patience, of thought or good will,
For the field—the field awaiteth us still.]

"Water! water!" all over the field:
To nothing but Death will that wound-voice
yield.

One, as he crieth, is sitting half bent;
What holds he so close?—his body is rent.
Another is mouthless, with eyes on cheek;
Unto the raven he may not speak.
One would fain kill him; and one half round
The place where he writhes, hath up-beaten
the ground.



Like a mad horse hath he beaten the ground,
And the feathers and music that litter it
round,

The gore, and the mud, and the golden sound.
Come hither, ye cities! ye ball-rooms, take
breath!

See what a floor hath the Dance of Death!⁶

⁶ “*Water! water!*” *all over the field:*

To nothing but death will that wound-voice yield.

One, as he crieth, &c.

Come hither, ye cities! ye ball-rooms, take breath!

See what a floor hath the Dance of Death.

“A few stragglers of each party still continued engaged, and this part of the affray took place within twenty yards of us. One of our dragoons came to the water with a frightful wound; *his jaw was entirely separated from the upper part of his face, and hung on his breast*; the poor fellow made an effort to drink in that wretched condition.”—COOKE’S *Peninsular War*, vol. i. p. 173.

“I ran towards the large breach (at Ciudad Rodrigo), and met an officer slowly walking between two soldiers of the rifle corps. I asked who it was, when he faintly replied, ‘*Uniacke,*’ and walked on. *One of his eyes was blown out, and the flesh was torn off his arms and legs.* He had taken chocolate with our mess, an hour and a half

The floor is alive, though the lights are out;
What are those dark shapes, flitting about?
Flitting about, yet no ravens they,
Not foes, yet not friends,—mute creatures of
prey;

before! He died in excruciating agony.” — COOKE, vol. i. p. 121.

“One round shot had struck down seven of the enemy on the left of the road; some of them were dead; others still alive, with either legs or arms knocked off, or otherwise horribly mutilated, and were crying out in extreme anguish, *and imploring the soldiers to shoot them, and put an end to their dreadful sufferings.* A German hussar, in our service, answered them that they would be kindly treated by our medical officers. ‘No! no!’ they vociferated, ‘we cannot bear to live. Countrymen, we are Germans; pray kill us, and shorten our miseries.’” — COOKE, vol. i. p. 279.

Speaking of a man who was hacked and hewed for being a spy, the author says, “This poor fellow, it was supposed by the medical men, must have died a death of extreme agony, *for the ground under him was dug up with his struggling under the torture which had been inflicted on him.*”—*Id.*

“When such evidence of destruction was apparent at a distance from the field, what a display of devastation the narrow theatre of yesterday’s conflict must have

Their prey is lucre, their claws a knife,
 Some say they take the beseeching life.
 Horrible pity is theirs for despair,
 And they the love-sacred limbs leave bare.⁷

presented. Fancy may conceive it; but description must necessarily be scanty and imperfect. On the small surface of two square miles, it was ascertained that 50,000 *men and horses were lying*. The luxurious crop of *grain*, which had covered the field of battle, was *reduced to litter, and beaten into the earth*; and the surface trodden down by the cavalry, and furrowed deeply by cannon wheels, was strewn with many a relic of the fight. *Helmets and cuirasses, scattered fire-arms and broken swords, all the variety of military ornaments, lancers' caps and Highland bonnets, uniforms of every colour, plume and pennon, musical instruments, the apparatus of artillery, drums, bugles*; but, good God, why dwell on the harrowing picture of a slaughter field? Each and every ruinous display bore a mute testimony to the miseries of such a battle."—BOOTH'S *Waterloo*.

⁷ *What are those dark shapes, flitting about?*
Their prey is lucre, their claws a knife,
Some say they take the beseeching life:
Horrible pity is theirs for despair,
And they the love-sacred limbs leave bare.

Alluding to followers of the camp, and others, who

Love will come to-morrow, and sadness,
Patient for the fear of madness,
And shut its eyes for cruelty,
So many pale beds to see.
Turn away, thou Love, nor weep
More in covering his last sleep;
Thou *hast* him:—blessed is thine eye!
Friendless Famine has yet to die.^s

rifle the field after the battle, and who are understood to kill as well as plunder. Some have been said to be females! so brutalising is war. Smollett, as if in excuse for the execrable nature of his hero, "Count Fathom," has made one of these his mother. She is shot by a dying dragoon, while about to despatch him herself!

"The dead could not be numbered; and by those who visited this dreadful field of glory and of death (Waterloo), the day after the battle, the spectacle of horror that it exhibited can never be forgotten. *The mangled and lifeless bodies were even then stripped of every covering.* Everything of the smallest value was already carried off."—COOKE.

^s *Turn away, thou Love, nor weep
More in covering his last sleep;*

A shriek !—Great God ! what superhuman
Peal was that ? Not man, nor woman,
Nor twenty madmen, crush'd, could wreak
Their soul in such a ponderous shriek.
Dumbly, for an instant, stares
The field ; and creep men's dying hairs.

*Thou hast him :—blessed is thine eye !
Friendless Famine has yet to die.*

“ The battle of Waterloo was fought on a Saturday. The last numbers of the wounded were not carried off the field till the following Thursday. Imagine what they must have suffered meanwhile, not only from the agony of their wounds, but from thirst and starvation !

“ The road between Waterloo and Brussels, which passes for nine miles through the thick forest of Soignes, was choked up with scattered baggage, broken waggons, and dead horses. The heavy rains, and the great passage upon it, had rendered it almost impassable, so that it was with extreme difficulty that the carriages containing the wounded could be brought along. The way was lined with unfortunate men, who had crept from the field, and many, unable to go farther, lay down and died : holes dug by the road-side served as their graves, and the road, weeks after the battle, was strewn with the tattered remains of their clothes and accoutrements. In every village and hamlet, on every road, in every part of the country, *for thirty miles round, wounded soldiers were*

O friend of man! O noble creature!
Patient and brave, and mild by nature,
Mild by nature, and mute as mild,
Why brings he to these passes wild,
Thee, gentle horse, thou shape of beauty?
Could he not do his dreadful duty,
(If duty it be, which seems mad folly)
Nor link thee to his melancholy?

found wandering ; the wounded Belgic and Dutch stragglers exerted themselves as much as possible to reach their own homes. So great were the numbers of the wounded, that, notwithstanding the most active and unremitted exertions, the last were not removed from the field of battle into Brussels till the Thursday following.”—Page xxxii.

“I will not attempt to describe the scene of slaughter which the fields presented, or what any person possessed of the least spark of humanity must have felt, while we viewed the dreadful situation of some *thousands of wounded wretches, who remained without assistance through a bitter cold night, succeeded by a day of most scorching heat.* English and French were dying by the side of each other, and I have no doubt hundreds, who were not discovered when the dead were buried, and who were unable to crawl to any habitation, must have perished by famine.”—Page xlii.

Two noble steeds lay side by side,
One cropp'd the meek grass ere it died ;
Pang-struck it struck t' other, already torn,
And out of its bowels that shriek was born.⁹

Now see what crawleth, well as it may,
Out of the ditch, and looketh that way.
What horror all black, in the sick moonlight,
Kneeling, half human, a burthensome sight ;
Loathly and liquid, as fly from a dish ;
Speak, Horror ! thou, for it withereth flesh.

“The grass caught fire; the wounded were by;
Writhing till eve did a remnant lie;
Then feebly this coal abateth his cry;

⁹ *Two noble steeds lay side by side,
One cropp'd the meek grass ere it died ;
Pang-struck it struck t' other, already torn,
And out of its bowels that shriek was born.*

I have mislaid the memorandum recording this appalling circumstance. The horse rarely utters a voice, even in health and joy, which renders its cry of agony particularly horrific.

But he hopeth! he hopeth! joy lighteth his eye,
For gold he possesseth, and Murder is nigh!"¹⁰

O goodness in horror! O ill not all ill!
In the worst of the worst may be fierce Hope
still.

¹⁰ *Now see what crawleth, well as it may,
Out of the ditch, and looketh that way.*

*"The grass caught fire; the wounded were by;
Writhing till eve did a remnant lie;
Then feebly this coal abateth his cry;
But he hopeth! he hopeth! joy lighteth his eye,
For gold he possesseth, and Murder is nigh!"*

He hopes to be put out of his misery by the wretches
before mentioned.

"About six o'clock in the evening a dreadful occurrence took place. *The long dry grass took fire*, and the flames spreading rapidly over the field of action, *a great number of the wounded were scorched to death*. For those who escaped a large hospital was established in the town of Talavera."—*Peninsular Campaign*, vol. ii. p. 244.

"The French as well as the British soldiers, at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, were carried up into the air, or jammed amongst the rubbish, some with heads, arms, or legs, sticking out of the earth. I saw one of the unfortunate soldiers in a blanket, with *his face, head, and*

To-morrow with dawn will come many a
wain,

And bear away loads of human pain,

body as black as a coal, and cased in a black substance like a shell; his features were no longer distinguishable, and all his hair was singed from off his head, but still the unfortunate man was alive. How long he lived in this horrible situation I cannot say.”—COOKE, vol. i. p. 128.

“As we moved off, the dead and the dying lay under the trees (the trunks of many of them in flames), pale and shivering, with their bloody congealed bandages, *imploring us not to leave them in that horrible situation, in the middle of the forest in the depth of winter. However, to attempt to afford them assistance was impossible.* Every individual had enough to do to drag himself along, after three days’ privation.”—COOKE, vol. i. p. 239.

“Two of our men, and four sepoy of the 70th, in the unthinking way peculiar to the lower classes, went and sat down by one of the ammunition waggons we had captured, when the Europeans took out their pipes, and began to smoke; a spark communicated with the powder, and the whole blew up, leaving these six poor fellows hopelessly scorched on the ground. One man’s head was blown off, and he was the happiest of the whole—for the agony the others must have suffered is indescribable. One of them started up and commenced running about all in flames, until, overcome with the torment, he fell to

Piles of pale beds for the 'spitals; but some
Again will awake in home-mornings, and some,
Dull herds of the war, again follow the drum.

the ground. All this time no one dared to go near him, as his ammunition pad was in a blaze, and had not yet exploded. It was fearful to see the flames eating into his vitals, and his unavailing struggles to free himself from them. At last I saw a piece of a tent lying on the ground, which I snatched up and threw over him: but there was no hope for him. All of them, in their agony, had torn off every stitch of clothing; and the black and scorched flesh hanging in strips—their withered tongues protruding from their mouths, in which the blood was gurgling, as they gasped for breath—their faces like blackened masks, and their eyes starting from their sockets—their groans, and the screams for water, with which they pointed to their parched mouths, showed a frightful picture of some of the horrors attendant upon war. They were all taken to the hospital instantly; but none was likely to recover. I hope I may never witness such a sight again—excruciating suffering without the power of rendering assistance. The commander-in-chief came down the line just after this catastrophe, and we stood to our arms and cheered him as he passed.”—*Journal of a Subaltern during the Campaign in the Punjab. (Extracted into the “Manchester Examiner,” and “Times.”)*

From others, faint blood shall in families flow,
With wonder at life, and young oldness in woe;
Yet hence may the movers of great earth grow.¹¹
Now, even now, I hear them at hand,
Though again Captain Sword is up in the land,
Marching anew for more fields like these
In the health of his flag in the morning breeze.

Sneereth the trumpet, and stampeth the drum,
And again Captain Sword in his pride doth
come;

¹¹ *Piles of pale beds for the 'spitals, &c.*

*From others, faint blood shall in families flow,
With wonder at life, and young oldness in woe,
Yet hence may the movers of great earth grow.*

It is forgotten, amidst the medals, and titles, and annual feasts, and other "glories" that follow the miseries of war, how many maimed and blood-saddened men are still suffering in hospitals and private houses; and how much offspring, in all probability, is rendered sickly and melancholy. The author of the present poem believes that he owes the worst part of his constitution to the illness and anxiety caused, to one of the best of mothers, by the American war.

He passeth the fields where his friends lie lorn,
Feeding the flowers and the feeding corn,¹²
Where under the sunshine cold they lie,
And he hasteth a tear from his old grey eye.¹³

¹² *Feeding the flowers and the feeding corn.*

“Every tree in the wood of Hougoumont is pierced with balls; in one alone, I counted the holes where upwards of twenty had lodged. But the strokes which were fatal to human life have not actually injured them; though their trunks are filled with balls, and their branches broken and destroyed, their verdure is still the same. Wild flowers are still blooming, and wild raspberries ripening beneath their shade; *while huge black piles of human ashes, dreadfully offensive in smell, are all that now remain of the heroes who fought and fell upon the fatal spot.* Beside some graves, at the outskirts of this wood, the little wild flower, *Forget-me-not*—(‘*mysostis arvensis*,’) was blooming, and the flaring red *poppy* had already sprung up around, and even upon them, as if in mockery of the dead.” —BOOTH’S *Waterloo*, p. xix.

¹³ *And he hasteth a tear from his old grey eye.*

The tears of an old soldier for the fate of his comrades are some of the most affecting in the world, and do him immortal honour; far more honour than thousands of things which are considered more glorifying.

Small thinking is his but of work to be done,
And onward he marcheth, using the sun :
He slayeth, he wasteth, he spouteth his fires
On babes at the bosom, and bed-rid sires ;¹⁴

“They parted : Blucher proceeded on his way—Lord Wellington returned to Waterloo. As he crossed again the fatal scene, on which the silence of death had now succeeded to the storm of battle, the moon breaking from dark clouds shed an uncertain light upon this wide field of carnage, covered with mangled thousands of that gallant army, whose heroic valour had won for him the brightest wreath of victory, and left to future time an imperishable monument of their country’s fame. He saw himself surrounded by the bloody corpses of his veteran soldiers, who had followed him through distant lands—of his friends—of his associates in arms—his companions through many an eventful year of danger and of glory ; in that awful pause which follows the mortal conflict of man with man, emotions, unknown or stifled in the heat of battle, forced their way ; the feelings of the man triumphed over those of the general, and in the very hour of victory Lord Wellington burst into tears.”

¹⁴ *He slayeth, he wasteth, he spouteth his fires
On babes at the bosom, and bed-rid sires.*

“Long ere the hour of the sun’s decline, it grew as dark as midnight. About ten o’clock the terrific shelling

He bursteth pale cities, through smoke and
through yell,
And bringeth behind him, hot-blooded, his hell.

commenced, every whistling shell bearing on its lighted wings messengers of death and desolation. I never saw these implements of destruction so accurately thrown—some of them scarcely five inches above the walls of the fort. In five minutes the screams of the women in the fort were dreadful. In places so confined, where numberless houses were crowded together, every shell must have found its way to some poor wretch's dwelling, and perhaps torn from mothers' bosoms their clinging babes. No person can estimate the dreadful carnage committed by shells, but those whose fate it has been to witness the effects of these messengers of death. On this occasion our shells were very numerous, and of enormous size, many of them thirteen inches and a half in calibre. The system of shelling had been so improved, in the twelve years which had elapsed since the siege of Bhurtpore, that, instead of about one shell in about five minutes from a single battery, it was by no means extraordinary to see twenty in one minute, from the numerous batteries which were brought to bear on this place. It was, at times, truly awful, to see ten of these soaring in the air together, seemingly riding on the midnight breeze, and disturbing the slumbering clouds on their pillows of rest; all transporting to a destined spot the implements of havoc and

Then the weak door is barr'd, and the soul all
sore,
And hand-wringing helplessness paceth the
floor,

desolation contained within their iron sides. The moon hid herself, in seeming pensiveness, behind a dense black cloud, as though reluctant to look on such a scene in its garb of blackest woe. Some carcaroes were also thrown. These, when in the air, are not unlike a fiery man soaring above. They are sent to burn houses, or blow up magazines. Far and wide they stretch forth their claws of death; and well might the poor natives call them devils of the night, or fiends of the clouds. To complete this dreadful scene, the roaring Congreves ran along the bastion's top, breaking legs and arms, with their shaking tails. Nothing could be more grand to the eye, or more affecting to the heart, than this horrid spectacle. Still the superstitious foe were stimulated by some hoary priest with hopes of victory, while they imbrued their hands in the blood of their children, their parents, and their friends. Our shells found their way to their very cells, tearing babes from their mothers' bosoms, and dealing death and destruction around. *Oh! what must be the anguish of a fond mother, to see nothing but the head of her fondling hanging to her bosom!* I will relate one melancholy case of this kind, out of numbers that came within my observation, and actually happened at this place:—

"A female was lying on a bed of green silk, under her head was a pillow of the same material ; her right arm had, no doubt, cradled her babe, and her left was extended, as though for the purpose of keeping her child close to her. A large shell had perforated the tiled roof, and having made its way through three floors, had gone through the foot of the bed and penetrated some depth into the fourth floor. A piece of this shell had gone through the woman's forehead, carrying away a great part of her head, so that her death, according to the opinion of a medical man who saw her, must have been instantaneous. *The lower part of the child's body, from the hips downwards, was entirely gone ; but, strange to say, its mother's nipple still hung in the left corner of its mouth, and its little right hand still held by its mother's clothes, which, probably, it had grasped at the first noise of the shell.* We understood that this woman was the wife of a most respectable officer in the fort, who had met his death some hours before her, and was, therefore, in pity spared the afflicting sight. *Such, reader, are the scenes of war. Such are the scenes which soldiers in the course of service are called upon to witness.* The poor woman and her babe were committed to the grave ; probably the first of her generation that ever returned to the earth as her last home, for she was a Hindoo woman.

"Near a small village, a beautiful young woman, about sixteen, had been seen, and ultimately seized. Her husband, to whom she had been wedded only about three months, was one of those who were killed when the

magazine blew up. From that period, nothing could soothe her or appease her grief; no power could restrain her; and at last she escaped into an adjoining wood or rumna. When I saw her she was running wildly; but at times she would pause, hold up her finger, and tell you to listen, when she would exclaim, with the most heart-rending shriek,—‘That was him! It was he that did speak!—Yet now he is gone!’ Then the poor bewildered maniac would tear her coal-black hair, which was hanging in ringlets down her back and bosom, and at length sink exhausted to the ground. She was taken to the camp and committed to the care of some of her relations, who had been taken prisoners.

“How it was possible that a single individual could have escaped such a bombardment was to us a mystery; for large houses were literally torn up by the roots. They had thrown a great number of their dead into a well, and many lay in the ditch, a melancholy and revolting sight, for the sun had swollen them to an enormous size.

“It seems that the moment any of their children were killed, in houses remote from the well, they were thrown into the street. I counted five limbless babes in one street.”—*Military Career of John Shipp*, vol. ii. p. 190.

“Long will the Sikhs have cause to remember the battle of Goojerat. The whole line of their flight was strewn with dead. We advanced into their camp over heaps of dead and dying. It wanted nothing more to show the gallant stand they had made. Everything was in confusion—tumbrils overturned, guns dismounted, wag-

gons with their wheels off, oxen and camels rushing wildly about, wounded horses plunging in their agony, beds, blankets, boxes, ammunition, strewed about the ground in a perfect chaos; the wounded lying there groaning, some begging to be despatched, others praying for mercy, and some, with scowling looks of impotent rage, striving to cut down those who came near them, and thereby insuring their own destruction, for but little quarter, I am ashamed to say, was given, and even those we managed to save from the vengeance of our men were, I fear, killed afterwards. But, after all, it is a war of extermination. The most heart-rending sight of the day was one I witnessed in a tent I entered. There, on the ground, bleeding to death, lay a young mother; her leg had been carried off by a round shot, and the jagged stump protruded in a ghastly manner through the mangled flesh. She held a baby to her breast, and as she bent over it with maternal anxiety, all her thoughts seemed to be of her child. She appeared totally regardless of the agony she must have been suffering, and to think of nothing but the poor infant, which was drawing its nourishment from her failing breast. I gave her some water, and she drank it greedily, raising her large imploring eyes to my face, with an expression that was heart-rending to witness. I was obliged to leave the poor creature, and go on with the regiment, but the remembrance of that sight will live with me till my dying day."—*Extract from the Journal of a Subaltern of the 2nd Europeans, in the Battle of Goojerat. (From the "Times.")*

And the lover is slain, and the parents are
nigh—¹⁵

Oh God ! let me breathe, and look up at thy
sky !

Good is as hundreds, evil as one ;
Round about goeth the golden sun.

¹⁵ *And the lover is slain, and the parents are nigh.*

“We have the assurance of Marshal Suchet, that the officers of his army made tremendous exertions to stop the carnage. But the soldiers, with hands already steeped in blood, would not be restrained. Within and without the town the slaughter continued with unabated ferocity. The claims of age and sex were disregarded. Those who sought refuge in the churches were massacred, even at the altar. *Beauty, helplessness, and innocence, did not save life, though they ensured violation.*”—*Peninsular War*, vol. iii. p. 131.

“This successful achievement was followed by the usual scenes of riot and excess. The men, no longer amenable to discipline, ransacked the houses in search of plunder. The cellars were broken open, and emptied of their contents; many houses were wantonly set on fire; and the yells of brutal triumph, uttered by the *intoxicated soldiers*, were heard in wild dissonance with the screams of the wounded. Thus passed the night. In the morn-

ing, by the exertions of the officers, discipline was partially restored. The soldiers by degrees returned to their duty, and the blind appetites of their brutal natures became again subjected to moral restraint."—Vol. iii. p. 188.

"As soon as the fighting (at St. Sebastian's, in Spain) began to wax faint, the horrors of rapine and plunder succeeded. Fortunately, there were few females in the place; but of the fate of the few which were there, I cannot even think without a shudder. The houses were everywhere ransacked, the furniture wantonly broken, the churches profaned, the images dashed to pieces; wine and spirit cellars were broken open, and the troops, heated already with angry passions, became absolutely mad by intoxication. All order and discipline were abandoned. The officers no longer had the slightest control over their men, who, on the contrary, controlled the officers; nor is it by any means certain that several of the latter did not fall by the hands of the former, when they vainly attempted to bring them to a sense of submission.

"Night had now set in, but the darkness was effectually dispelled by the glare of burning houses, which one after another took fire. The morning of the 31st had risen upon St. Sebastian, as neat and regularly built a town as any in Spain—long before midnight it was one sheet of flame; and by noon, on the following day, little remained of it except its smoking ashes. The houses being lofty, like those in the Old Town of Edinburgh, and the streets straight and narrow, the fire flew from one to another with extraordinary rapidity. At first,

some attempts were made to extinguish it, but these soon proved useless, and then the only matter to be considered was how, personally, to escape its violence. Many a migration was accordingly effected from house to house, till, at last, houses enough to shelter all could no longer be found, and the streets became the place of rest to the majority.

“The spectacle which these presented was truly shocking. A strong light falling on them, from the burning houses, disclosed crowds of dead, dying, and intoxicated men, huddling indiscriminately together. Carpets, rich tapestry, beds, curtains, wearing apparel, and everything valuable to persons in common life, were carelessly scattered about upon the bloody pavement, whilst ever and anon fresh bundles of these were thrown from the windows above. Here you would see a drunken fellow whirling a string of watches round his head, and then dashing them against the wall; there another, more provident, stuffing his bosom with such smaller articles as he most prized. Next would come a party rolling a cask of wine, or spirits, with loud acclamations, which in an instant was tapped, and in an incredibly short space of time emptied of its contents. Then the ceaseless hum of conversation, the occasional laugh, and wild shout of intoxication, the pitiable cries, or deep moans of the wounded, and the unintermitted roar of the flames, produced altogether such a concert as no man who listened to it can ever forget.

“After these various noises, the greater number began gradually to subside, as night passed on—and long before

dawn there was a fearful silence. Sleep had succeeded inebriety with the bulk of the army—of the poor wretches who groaned and shrieked three hours ago, many had expired ; and the very fire had almost consumed itself, by consuming everything upon which it could feed. Nothing, therefore, could now be heard, except an occasional faint moan, scarcely distinguishable from the heavy breathings of the sleepers, and even that was soon heard no more.”

V.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD, IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS
GREAT VICTORIES, BECAME INFIRM IN HIS
WITS.

BUT to win at the game, whose moves are
death,

It maketh a man draw too proud a breath :
And to see his force taken for reason and
right,

It tendeth to unsettle his reason quite.
Never did chief of the line of Sword
Keep his wits whole at that drunken board.
He taketh the size, and the roar, and fate,
Of the field of his action, for soul as great :

He smiteth and stunneth the cheek of mankind,
And saith, "Lo! I rule both body and mind."

Captain Sword forgot his own soul,
Which of aught save itself, resented control;
Which whatever his deeds, ordained them still,
Bodiless monarch, enthroned in his will:
He forgot the close thought, and the burning
heart,
And pray'rs, and the mild moon hanging
apart,
Which lifted the seas with her gentle looks,
And growth, and death, and immortal books,
And the Infinite Mildness, the soul of souls,
Which layeth earth soft 'twixt her silver poles;
Which ruleth the stars, and saith not a word;
Whose speed in the hair of no comet is heard;
Which sendeth the soft sun, day by day,
Mighty, and genial, and just always,
Owning no difference, doing no wrong,
Loving the orbs and the least bird's song,

The great, sweet, warm angel, with golden
rod,
Bright with the smile of the distance of God.

Captain Sword, like a witless thing,
Of all under heaven must needs be a king,
King of kings, and lord of lords,
Swayer of souls as well as of swords,
Ruler of speech, and through speech, of
thought;
And hence to his brain was a madness brought.
He madden'd in East, he madden'd in West,
Fiercer for sights of men's unrest,
Fiercer for talk, amongst awful men,
Of their new mighty leader, Captain Pen,
A conqueror strange, who sat in his home
Like the wizard that plagued the ships of
Rome,
Noiseless, showless, dealing no death,
But victories, winged, went forth from his
breath.

Three thousand miles across the waves*
Did Captain Sword cry, bidding souls be slaves:
Three thousand miles did the echo return
With a laugh and a blow made his old cheeks
burn.

Then he call'd to a wrong-madden'd people,
and swore †
Their name in the map should never be more;
Dire came the laugh, and smote worse than
before.
Were earthquake a giant, up-thrusting his head
And o'erlooking the nations, not worse were
the dread.

Then, lo! was a wonder, and sadness to
see;
For with that very people, their leader, stood
he,

* The American War.

† The French War.

Incarnate afresh, like a Cæsar of old ;*
But because he look'd back, and his heart was
cold,
Time, hope, and himself for a tale he sold.
Oh largest occasion, by man ever lost !
Oh throne of the world, to the war-dogs tost !

He vanish'd ; and thinly there stood in his
place
The new shape of Sword, with an humbler
face,†
Rebuking his brother, and preaching for right,
Yet aye when it came, standing proud on his
might,
And squaring its claims with his old small sight ;
Then struck up his drums, with ensign furl'd,
And said, " I will walk through a subject
world :

* Napoleon.

† The Duke of Wellington, or existing Military Toryism.

Earth, just as it is, shall for ever endure,
The rich be too rich, and the poor too poor ;
And for this I'll stop knowledge. I'll say to
it, 'Flow
Thus far ; but presume no farther to flow :
For me, as I list, shall the free airs blow.' "

Laugh'd after him loudly that land so fair,*
"The king thou sett'st over us, by a free air
Is swept away, senseless." And old Sword
then
First knew the might of great Captain Pen.
So strangely it bow'd him, so wilder'd his
brain,
That now he stood, hatless, renouncing his
reign ;
Now mutter'd of dust laid in blood ; and now
'Twixt wonder and patience went lifting his
brow.

* The Glorious Three Days.

Then suddenly came he, with gowned men,
And said, "Now observe me—*I'm* Captain

Pen :

I'll lead all your changes—I'll write all your
books—

I'm everything—all things—I'm clergymen,
cooks,

Clerks, carpenters, hosiers,—I'm Pitt—I'm
Lord Grey."

'Twas painful to see his extravagant way;
But heart ne'er so bold, and hand ne'er so
strong,
What are they, when truth and the wits go
wrong?

VI.

OF CAPTAIN PEN, AND HOW HE FOUGHT WITH CAPTAIN SWORD.

Now tidings of Captain Sword and his state
Were brought to the ears of Pen the Great,
Who rose and said, "His time is come."
And he sent him, but not by sound of drum,
Nor trumpet, nor other hasty breath,
Hot with questions of life and death,
But only a letter calm and mild ;
And Captain Sword he read it, and smiled,
And said, half in scorn, and nothing in fear,
(Though his wits seem'd restor'd by a danger
near,

For brave was he ever), "Let Captain Pen
Bring at his back a million men,
And I'll talk with his wisdom, and not till then."
Then replied to his messenger Captain Pen,
"I'll bring at my back a *world* of men."

Out laugh'd the captains of Captain Sword,
But their chief look'd vex'd, and said not a
word,

For thought and trouble had touch'd his ears
Beyond the bullet-like sense of theirs,
And wherever he went, he was 'ware of a sound
Now heard in the distance, now gathering round,
Which irk'd him to know what the issue might
be ;

But the soul of the cause of it well guess'd he.

Indestructible souls among men
Were the souls of the line of Captain Pen ;
Sages, patriots, martyrs mild,
Going to the stake, as child

Goeth with his prayer to bed ;
Dungeon-beams, from quenchless head ;
Poets, making earth aware
Of its wealth in good and fair ;
And the benders to their intent,
Of metal and of element ;
Of flame the enlightener, beauteous,
And steam, that bursteth his iron house ;
And adamantine giants blind,
That, without master, have no mind.

Heir to these, and all their store,
Was Pen, the power unknown of yore ;
And as their might still created might,
And each work'd for him by day and by night,
In wealth and wondrous means he grew,
Fit to move the earth anew ;
Till his fame began to speak
Pause, as when the thunders wake,
Muttering in the beds of heaven :
Then, to set the globe more even,

Water he call'd, and Fire, and Haste,
Which hath left old Time displaced—
And Iron, mightiest now for Pen,
Each of his steps like an army of men—
(Sword little knew what was leaving him then)
And out of the witchcraft of their skill,
A creature he call'd, to wait on his will—
Half iron, half vapour, a dread to behold—
Which evermore panted and evermore roll'd,
And uttered his words a million fold.
Forth sprang they in air, down raining like
dew,
And men fed upon them, and mighty they
grew.

Ears giddy with custom that sound might
not hear,
But it woke up the rest, like an earthquake
near;
And that same night of the letter, some strange
Compulsion of soul brought a sense of change;

And at midnight the sound grew into a roll
As the sound of all gath' rings from pole to pole,
From pole unto pole, and from clime to clime,
Like the roll of the wheels of the coming of
time ;—

A sound as of cities, and sound as of swords
Sharpening, and solemn and terrible words,
And laughter as solemn, and thunderous drum-
ming,

A tread as if all the world were coming.
And then was a lull, and soft voices sweet
Call'd into music those terrible feet,
Which rising on wings, lo! the earth went round
To the burn of their speed with a golden sound ;
With a golden sound, and a swift repose,
Such as the blood in the young heart knows ;
Such as Love knows, when his tumults cease ;
When all is quick, and yet all is at peace.

And when Captain Sword got up next morn,
Lo! a new-faced world was born ;

For not an anger nor pride would it show,
Nor aught of the loftiness now found low,
Nor would his own men strike a single blow :
Not a blow for their old, unconsidering lord
Would strike the good soldiers of Captain
Sword ;

But weaponless all, and wise they stood,
In the level dawn, and calm brotherly good ;
Yet bowed to him they, and kiss'd his hands,
For such were their new good lord's commands,
Lessons rather, and brotherly plea ;
Reverence the past, O brothers, quoth he ;
Reverence the struggle and mystery,
And faces human in their pain ;
Nor his the least that could sustain
Cares of mighty wars, and guide
Calmly where the red deaths ride.

“But how! what now?” cried Captain Sword;
“Not a blow for your gen’ral? not even a word?
What! traitors? deserters?”

“ Ah no!” cried they ;
“ But the ‘ game’s ’ at an end ; the ‘ wise ’ won’t
play.”

“ And where’s your old spirit?”

“ The same, though another ;
Man may be strong without maiming his
brother.”

“ But enemies ?”

“ Enemies ! Whence should they come,
When all interchange what was but known to
some ?”

“ But famine ? but plague ? worse evils by
far.”

“ O last mighty rhet’ric to charm us to
war !

Look round—what has earth, now it equably
speeds,
To do with these foul and calamitous needs?
Now it equably speeds, and thoughtfully
glows,
And its heart is open, never to close?"

"Still I can govern," said Captain Sword ;
"Fate I respect ; and I stick to my word."
And in truth so he did ; but the word was one
He had sworn to all vanities under the sun,
To do, for their conq'rors, the least could be
done.

Besides, what had *he* with his worn-out story,
To do with the cause he had wrong'd, and
the glory ?

No : Captain Sword a sword was still,
He could not unteach his lordly will ;
He could not attemper his single thought ;
It might not be bent, nor newly wrought :

And so, like the tool of a disused art,
He stood at his wall, and rusted apart.

'Twas only for many-soul'd Captain Pen
To make a world of swordless men.

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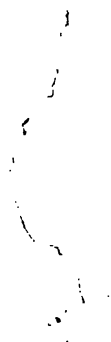
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